

Morphology: Introduction
I. Fundamental terms and concepts

- (1) **morpheme** — Minimal unit of *sound-meaning correspondence*; cannot be broken down into smaller parts that contribute consistent meaning

(a) Examples:

<i>hon</i> ‘book’	<i>taka-</i> ‘high’	<i>tabe-</i> ‘eat’
<i>-zi-</i> ‘self’	<i>-ten-</i> ‘turn’	<i>-sya-</i> ‘vehicle’
<i>-sa</i> ‘...-ness’	<i>-i</i> ‘A(djective)-NONPAST’	

- (b) **Morphological segmentation** — dividing words into their morphemes

- Analysis procedure: Compare minimally different forms and look for how sound shape matches up with meaning
- Morphemes may be affected by phonological rules! → In carrying out morphological segmentation, allow for minor variation in sound shape

- (2) **Languages vary** as to what kinds of **grammatical meaning** are obligatorily expressed with morphemes

- Compare these English sentences with corresponding natural translations

(a) I ate sushi.	(c) Ayako ate sushi.	(e) The student ate sushi.
(b) We ate sushi.	(d) Masahiko ate sushi.	(f) The students ate sushi.

- How are **person** and **number** marked on verbs in Japanese?
- What kinds of meaning get encoded with morphemes in Japanese?

- (3) Side note: Some other interesting facts observed in the translations in (2)

- (a) **Pronouns** are socially loaded and sometimes avoided

- (b) The gender of given (“first”) names can sometimes be predicted

- (c) The agent of a transitive verb can be marked with *-ga* (SUBJECT marker) or with *-wa* (TOPIC marker) — more about this distinction in a few weeks

- (4) Is a kanji character the same thing as a **morpheme**?

- (a) In many cases, kanji can give us **clues** about morphological structure

自転車 ‘bicycle’	電車 ‘electric train’	車庫 ‘garage, carport’
zi-ten- sya	den- sya	sya -ko

- (b) Do kanji and morphemes always correspond one-to-one?

- How many morphemes are in the word *mizuumi* 湖 ‘lake’ ?
- How many morphemes are in the word *kyoo* 今日 ‘today’ ?

- (d) Are the Japanese forms *higasi* 東 and *too* 東 the **same morpheme**?

- What would we say about *life* and *bio* in English?

II. Classifying morphemes

(5) One dimension for classifying morphemes:

- (a) **free** morpheme — Can be used alone as a word, with no morphemes added
 - Example: *hon* 'book'
 - Words are also free *forms* (by definition), but they may contain more than just one morpheme; example: *zi-ten-sya* 'self-turn-vehicle' (= 'bicycle')
- (b) **bound** morpheme — Must be combined with (an) other morpheme(s) to form a word; cannot stand alone
 - Examples: *taka-* 'high', *tabe-* 'eat', *zi-* 'self', *-sa* '...-ness', *-i* 'A-NONPAST'

(6) Another dimension for classifying morphemes:

- (a) **root** — A lexical content morpheme (=not just grammatical meaning) that cannot be decomposed into smaller parts
 - Every content word has at least one root; >1 root → compound word
 - Examples: *hon* 'book', *taka-* 'high', *tabe-* 'eat'
- (b) **affix** — A prefix or suffix; a bound morpheme that is not a root
 - (i) **derivational** affix — adds lexical meaning (creates a new word)
 - Example: *-sa* 'A-ness' — more precisely, *-sa* is an affix that forms N(oun) from A(djective), A(djectival)N(oun)
 - (ii) **inflectional** affix — adds grammatical meaning (tense, number, ...)
 - Example: *-i* 'A-NONPAST'

(7) Check-in: How does the **root/affix** distinction line up with the **free/bound** distinction? Are roots always free? Are affixes always bound?

III. Context: Big-picture issues in the study of Japanese morphology

(8) How many different **word classes** (also called lexical categories, "parts of speech") are there in Japanese?

→ Is the inventory of word classes universal?

(9) One widely accepted proposal in morphology is that **derivational** affixes may change the word class of a form, but **inflectional** affixes never do

→ Does data from Japanese bear on this claim?

(10) How do **morphology and phonology** interact in Japanese?

→ Does evidence from morphology give us any further insight into the phonological categories and phonological rules of Japanese?